

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 AID-05 TRSE-00 IO-13 OES-07
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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5957
INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 12688

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: IN, UR, PGOV
SUBJECT: INDO-SOVIET RELATIONS

REF: NEW DELHI 12469

1. MEETING WITH POL COUNSELOR SEPTEMBER 8, SOVIET EMBASSY
COUNSELOR ANDREI FIALKOVSKY CONFIRMED A SPATE OF RECENT PRESS
REPORTS THAT PRIME MINISTER DESAI WAS LIKELY TO VISIT THE
SOVIET UNION IN OCTOBER RATHER THAN IN SEPTEMBER AS ORIGI-
NALLY EXPECTED. ACCORDING TO FIALKOVSKY, THE PM WOULD PROB-
ABLY BE IN MOSCOW FOR ABOUT FIVE DAYS BETWEEN OCTOBER 20
AND 30; THE EXACT TIMING HAS NOT YET BEEN NAILED DOWN. FIAL-
KOVSKY SAID THE LATE OCTOBER TIMING WAS DUE TO PRIOR COMMIT-
MENTS ON BOTH THE INDIAN AND SOVIET SIDES, AN EXPLANATION
ALSO CARRIED IN THE PRESS ACCOUNTS.

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2. FIALKOVSKY SAID THAT NO AGENDA HAD BEEN WORKED UP FOR
THE MEETING. HE SUPPOSED, HE SAID, THAT THE CONVERSATIONS
WOULD RUN OVER THE USUAL GAMUT OF ISSUES, BUT DOUBTED THAT
THERE WOULD BE ANY PARTICULAR FOCUS OF INTERESTS. (THOUGH
HE WAS LESS CATEGORICAL THAN IN HIS REPORTED CONVERSATION WITH
A BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION OFFICER ABOUT THE STATE OF THE
INDO-SOVIET RUPEE/RUBLE NEGOTIATIONS, NEW DELHI 12462, HE

INDICATED THAT THERE WAS LITTLE POSSIBILITY THAN AN AGREE-
MENT ON THIS LONG STANDING ISSUE COULD BE WORKED OUT IN TIME
FOR A MOSCOW SIGNING IN LATE OCTOBER.) HE SAID THAT THE
VISIT WOULD SERVE TO BRING ABOUT BETTER PERSONAL RELATIONS
BETWEEN THE LEADERS OF THE TWO COUNTRIES AND WOULD DEMON-
STRATE THE CONTINUING STABILITY OF INDO-SOVIET RELATIONS.
IN A LAPSE IN HIS COMMAND OF ENGLISH, HE ADDED THAT IN
SCHEDULING BOTH MOSCOW AND WASHINGTON VISITS, THE NEW INDIAN
GOVERNMENT WAS SHOWING ITS COMMITMENT TO ITS PROCLAIMED
POLICY OF "INGENIOUS" NON-ALIGNMENT.

3. FIALKOVSKY SAID THAT THE SOVIETS HAD BEEN IMPRESSED,
IN THE COURSE OF THE CUSTOMARY INDO-SOVIET PRE-UNGA CONSUL-
TATIONS CARRIED OUT HERE LAST WEEK BY AMBASSADOR ZORIN, WITH
THE CONTINUITY OF INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY. THEY HAD FOUND
ALMOST NO CHANGE FROM THE LINE ON UNGA-RELATED MATTERS TAKEN
BY MRS. GANDHI'S GOVERNMENT LAST YEAR. FIALKOVSKY DID NOT
OBLIGE WITH MANY DETAILS OF THESE TALKS, BUT DID MENTION THAT
THE INDIANS HAD TOLD ZORIN THAT THEY COULD NOT SIGN THE NPT
NOR ACCEPT THE PROPOSED FIVE YEAR MORATORIUM ON ALL NUCLEAR
TESTING, INCLUDING PNES, PUT FORWARD BY THE US AT THE COM-
PREHENSIVE TEST BAN TREATY NEGOTIATIONS. (THE INDIANS HAVE
ALSO TOLD THE BRITS THAT THAT IS THEIR POSITION.) AT THE
SAME TIME, THEY REITERATED THE DESAI POSITION THAT THEY DID
NOT INTEND TO CONDUCT FURTHER PEACEFUL EXPLOSIONS.

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COMMENT: FIALKOVSKY'S ASSESSMENT OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE
PM'S PROJECTED SOVIET VISIT PARALLELS THE LINE WE HAVE HEARD
AT MEA, AND SEEMS ACCEPTED BY MANY WELL-INFORMED OBSERVERS
OF INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY HERE. THESE OBSERVERS SEE THE
VISIT AS A NATURAL REFLECTION OF INDIA'S INTEREST IN MAIN-
TAINING AND STABILIZING ITS IMPORTANT TIES WITH THE USSR. THE
VISIT TO THE US, IN THIS VIEW, REFLECTS A PARALLEL INTEREST
IN IMPROVING TIES WITH WASHINGTON, BUT NOT AT THE EXPENSE OF
THE DELHI-MOSCOW EQUATION (HENCE THE OPTICS OF TWO TRIPS).
WHETHER OVER THE LONGER TERM THE INDIANS CAN SUSTAIN THIS
REJECTION OF A ZERO-SUM GAME APPROACH TO ITS TIES WITH THE
US AND USSR IS UNCERTAIN. BUT THIS INTERPRETATION OF THE
INDIAN INTEREST IN VISITS TO BOTH MOSCOW AND WASHINGTON DUR-
ING THE FIRST SEVEN MONTHS OF THE DESAI GOVERNMENT SEEMS TO
US BASICALLY CORRECT
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